

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 /068 W

----- 045167

R 100620Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 438

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LILONGWE 1253

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ME

SUBJECT: NEW SECGEN OF MALAWI CONGRESS PARTY (MCP) NAMED

REF: LILONGWE 1192

1. NATIONAL MCP HEADQUARTERS ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 8 THAT RODWELL MUNYENYEMBE, MEMBER MCP NATIONAL EXECUTIVE AND MINISTER EDUCATION AND HEALTH, WAS APPOINTED BY LIFE PRESIDENT BANDA AS NEW SECRETARY GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY OF MCP EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 7. SAME COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCED THAT WADSON DELEZA, WHO HAS BEEN ACTING SECGEN AND ACTING ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY SINCE MUWALO'S OUSTER, WAS NAMED DEPUTY SECGEN AND DEPUTY ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO MCP.

2. COMMENT: MUNYENYEMBE WELL KNOWN TO EMBASSY AS SERIOUS AND PERSONABLE (SEE BLANTYRE A-11 OF FEB. 23, 1974 AND BIO REPORT PREPARED SEP. 13, 1973). RECENTLY HE HAS REPRESENTED GOM AT EMBASSY RECEPTIONS MARKING OPENING OF NEW LILONGWE CHANCELLERY AND JULY 4 BICENTENNIAL. HE HAS BEEN IMPORTANT SPOKESMAN FOR LIFE
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PRESIDENT, OFTEN TRAVELLING ON SPEAKING TOURS, PARTICULARLY IN

NORTHERN REGION FROM WHENCE HE COMES (CHITIPA DISTRICT). HE HAS REPRESENTED MALAWI AT MANY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, AMONG THEM 30TH UNGA AND RECENT NAIROBI NESCO CONFERENCE. GIVEN HIS NUMEROUS SPEAKING AND REPRESENTATIONAL FUNCTIONS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO EVALUATE HIS PERFORMANCE AS MINISTER ALTHOUGH NEITHER OF HIS PRESENT PORTFOLIOS ARE PRIORITY AREAS FOR BANDA. PRIOR TO ASSUMING HIS PRESENT DUTIES HE HAD BEEN MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND MINISTER OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE. AS A NORTHERNER HE WAS THOUGH TO BE ON THE ROPES DURING HEYDAY OF GWEDE AND MUWALO BUT NOW HAS CLIMBED TO REPLACE THE LATTER. HIS ENTIRE GOVERNMENT CAREER MANIFESTS QUICK ADVANCEMENT. WHILE WE EXPECT HIM TO BE A LOYAL TOOL OF PRESIDENT BANDA, HE HAS ALWAYS IMPRESSED THE EMBASSY AS REASONABLE AND INTELLIGENT MAN, AN INDICATION THAT EXCESSES OF GWEDE-MUWALO DAYS MAY BE AT AN END. MANY MALAWIANS HAVE ALREADY DEMONSTRATED TO EMBASSY RELIEF AT DEMISE OF GWEDESAND MUWALO AND HAVE INDICATED THEY LOOK FORWARD TO BETTER DAYS, ALTHOUGH IT DOUBTFUL THERE WILL BE PROFOUND CHANGES IN BANDA'S RULING STYLE.

3. LIFE PRESIDENT HAD MINISTER YOUTH AND CULTURE (CHAKUAMBA PHIRI) TELL DIPLOMATIC CORPS DEAN THAT DIPLOMATIC CORPS SHOULD KNOW THAT MUWALO AND GWEDE HAD BEEN IMPLICATED IN ASSASSINATION PLOT AIMED AT LIFE PRESIDENT DURING RECENT NORTHERN TOUR AND THEY MAY BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. WE HAVE LEARNED THAT MCP APPARATUS IS SPREADING THIS STORY AT PARTY MEETINGS. WE ARE FRANKLY SKEPTICAL OF THIS ASSASSINATION PLOT STORY AND SUSPECT IT MAY REPRESENT, ON PART OF THE MACHIAVELLIAN BANDA, ATTEMPT FOCUS ON MUWALO RESENTMENTS FOR UNUSUALLY HARSH ACTIONS TAKEN BY REGIME OVER PAST YEAR OR SO AND AT SAME TIME GIVE HIM GROUNDS FOR HARSH MEASURES AGAINST ANY "NEW" OPPOSITION, REAL OR IMAGINED.
STEVENSON

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